

News from the

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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TWO ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE INFORMATION SESSIONS PLANNED IN WOODBRIDGE, CARTERET

(TRENTON) – New Jersey Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus today announced that public meetings will be held Thursday, September 16 in Woodbridge and Carteret to educate residents about the Asian longhorned beetle, which has infested at least 400 trees in Carteret, the Avenel section of Woodbridge and along Carteret's border with Rahway.

State and federal agriculture and forestry representatives who are leading the hunt for the damaging beetles will attend the meetings scheduled for 1:30 p.m. in Carteret and 7 p.m. in Woodbridge. Secretary Kuperus, who moderated an August 31 meeting on the beetle in Carteret, will attend the Woodbridge meeting on September 16.

"Our best line of defense against these invasive pests is to alert residents, and these informational sessions allow residents to listen to the professionals and ask questions," said Secretary Kuperus. "The first sighting on August 2 was by a resident in Carteret, and the news reports about the effort to eradicate the beetle led another resident to notify us about what turned out to be an even larger infestation."

Asian longhorned beetles, native to China and Korea, have caused serious tree losses in New York State and Chicago. Only once before were the beetles found attacking trees in New Jersey, in Jersey City in October 2002. More than 100 infested trees at that site were removed to eradicate the beetle.

Already, more than 400 trees have been found to be infested with both adult beetles and eggs in Middlesex and Union Counties. A quarantine zone, including Carteret, Woodbridge, Rahway and Linden has been established, with restrictions on moving firewood, tree trimmings and other wood products.

The beetle can wreak havoc on hardwood trees such as maples, horsechestnuts, birches and elms. The female bores into the bark to lay her eggs. Once hatched, the grub-like young burrow deeper into the tree until finally reaching the woody tissue. A year later, as adults, they burrow back out.

Asian longhorned beetles are about 1 to 1.5 inches long and have a shiny, black exterior with whit spots. Their name comes from their long antennae, which are banded black and white.

Anyone suspecting the presence of this beetle should contact the NJDA at 1-866-BEETLE-1 or (609) 292-5440. For more information, visit the APHIS website at www.aphis.usda.gov and click on Asian longhorned beetle under "Hot Issues" or visit the Rutgers Cooperative Extension website at www.rce.rutgers.edu/presentations and click on Asian longhorned beetle under "Plant Agriculture."

The Woodbridge information session will be held 7 p.m. Thursday, September 16 in the Council Chambers, Woodbridge Town Hall, 1 Main Street, Woodbridge.

The Carteret information session will be held 1:30 p.m. Thursday, September 16 at the Thomas Deverin Community Center, an annex to the borough library, Cooke Avenue, Carteret.